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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
Washington, D. C.

Field Memorandum SCS #1055

Re: Soil Conservation Service  
Program, Policies, and Ob-  
jectives with Reference to  
the War and the Post-War  
Periods

February 18, 1942



TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS, WASHINGTON ASSISTANT CHIEFS AND DIVISION CHIEFS:

Recent Soil Conservation Service and Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment Administration memoranda have indicated some of the procedures to be followed in meeting SCS responsibilities during the emergency. It now appears desirable to re-examine briefly the long-time Service program, policies, and objectives and to consider in their light some of these new undertakings of the war and post-war period ahead.

The work of the SCS has been carried on through (a) assisting soil conservation districts—largely by assisting them to help landowners and operators develop and apply conservation plans for complete units, (b) demonstration projects, (c) Extension-SCS demonstration farms, (d) water facilities projects, (e) farm forestry projects, (f) flood control projects, (g) submarginal land purchase and development for needed land-use adjustments and conservation, and (h) assisting in improvement of farm irrigation and drainage installations. Information basic to carrying on this work effectively has been obtained through cooperative conservation research and conservation surveys.

Following the reorganization of the Department in 1939 a statement of SCS Acts, objectives, and policies was issued in FM 769 on March 25, 1939 (Superseded by Manual 11,100-11,120). The basic Acts under which SCS operates remain the same as set forth in the Manual, except that after June 30, 1942, no further work will be done by the Service under the Water Facilities Act of 1937. As of the same date Service activities under the Farm Forestry Act are to be expanded to include the Prairie States Forestry Project. The basic objectives and policies as set forth in the Manual remain unchanged but require new emphasis and assume increased significance in the present national emergency.

The primary responsibility of American agriculture during the emergency is the production of the food and fiber needed for victory without added impairment of the land. To carry its full share of this responsibility and contribute to the greatest possible extent to winning the war, the Department of Agriculture has reorganized its administrative machinery.

To avoid the costly production and land-use mistakes of the last war and as a further safeguard for our basic resource, the soil, the Soil Conservation Service has been grouped with the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, and the Sugar Division.

These four agencies will retain their present organizational status but their activities will be supervised and directed by the Administrator of Agricultural Conservation and Adjustment. The broad effect of this grouping is further to assure the farmer or rancher of his fair share of the national income, protection against financial losses from causes beyond his control, and assistance in the preservation and improvement of his principal capital asset, the soil.

The programs of the AAA and the SCS have been supplementary and complementary to each other in the past and there are opportunities for additional effective cooperation. Further adjustment of the farm conservation plans to secure maximum practice payments while carrying out the essential conservation work is desirable. Adjustment of AAA practices to provide more conservation is an objective that both agencies should strive to achieve to an even greater degree than in the past. Adjustment of AAA practice payments to further the simple conservation practice program where technical assistance is not available would materially advance the economy and effectiveness of conservation work. AAA payments for soil-conserving crops to which classes IV, V, VI, and VII lands should be retired represent a valuable aid in getting these areas rededicated to their best use.

The Soil Conservation Service is evaluating its activities and its resources by a yardstick that measures the contribution the Service can make toward winning the war by production with conservation. It is the duty of all working together to exert every possible effort toward winning the war and then the peace. The opportunity of a closer working relationship within the group set up under the recent reorganization is welcomed. Continuing cooperation should be maintained with Federal, State, and local organizations serving Agriculture.

The research branch of the Service, cooperating with the State Experiment Stations, will assemble all available data having a bearing on the problems involved in a form most useful to farmers and ranchers, district supervisors, county and State Agricultural Conservation and Agricultural Planning Committees, the military services, and others. Such information will be kept current. Research projects will be designed to determine as speedily as possible the solution of conservation problems of immediate concern to farmers, AAA, and SCS. Research workers will conduct field trials necessary for the extension of operations into new areas.

The Departmental policy of gearing SCS facilities and resources to the needs of soil conservation districts continues to be a primary responsibility. The formation of additional districts should be encouraged. The soil and water conservation program of districts can be counted on as an effective means of achieving war-time objectives.

In addition to the activities as set forth in the Manual, the impact of war has brought other responsibilities to the Service and the districts which must also be given immediate and serious attention. These have to do with: (1) increased acreages of erosion-inducing crops, as peanuts and soy beans, in certain areas, (2) a general increase in the production of crops which may accelerate erosion, (3) the erosion problem on land used for military purposes, and (4) plans for conservation in the post-war period.

To meet these new responsibilities the Service will (1) give immediate attention to the use of adequate measures and safeguards in critical production areas, (2) inaugurate a widespread program of simple practices, (3) provide effective assistance to the armed forces in accordance with existing agreement, and (4) continue the work of post-war planning.



## A WIDESPREAD PROGRAM OF SIMPLE PRACTICES

During the past eight years, Service technicians have learned that conservation practices fall broadly into two classes:

1. Those simple practices which are easy for the farmer to install with a minimum of direct technical guidance, and which at the same time will contribute materially to soil and water conservation, increased productivity of the land, and the welfare of the farmer and community. These simple practices consist of such measures as establishment of new pastures and improvement of old ones, woodland protection, and utilizing crop residues for conservation purposes rather than burning them. For range land such practices might include (1) bringing herds in line with long-time grazing capacities of the range, (2) culling of herds, (3) deferred and rotation grazing, (4) artificial re-seeding, (5) growing and maintaining feed reserves.
2. Those technical or complex practices requiring careful study and planning, such as are based on due consideration of the soil, slope, erosion, and other conditions. If installed improperly or without adequate planning, such practices frequently result in failure, with resultant discouragement to the farmer, loss of time, labor, and money, and irreparable damage to the land.

Examples of complex practices are the laying out and construction of satisfactory water disposal systems, as terracing with adequate outlets, and the planning and construction of stock ponds.

Likewise, Agricultural Adjustment Administration committeemen through their experience in checking farms for compliance have found that farmers often have difficulty in establishing these more complex conservation practices.

A program of simple practices should be initiated within portions of soil conservation districts not being reached by work unit personnel and outside soil conservation districts to the full extent of available personnel. The Soil Conservation Service should assist in (1) developing a list of simple practices by erosion problem areas or counties, (2) setting up guides for the application of simple practices on different kinds of land, (3) preparing simple specifications for practice application, (4) explaining the program to district supervisors and County USDA War Boards, and (5) developing procedures for carrying the program to the farmers. Unless absolutely necessary, the contribution of the Service (beyond the participation already established in connection with the work of War Boards) should end with (5). This would enable SCS personnel to continue with district soil conservation responsibilities. Carrying the simple practice program to the farmers and its application is the responsibility of War Boards, soil conservation districts, extension services, Agricultural Conservation and Agricultural Planning Committees, and others. SCS assistance in the simple practice program within districts will be accomplished through the governing bodies cooperating with War Boards and others, while outside districts such SCS assistance will be directly with War Boards and others.

### Critical Production Areas

Food and fiber needed by the Nation and its allies include large acreages of clean-tilled, soil-depleting crops. Wherever needed Service representatives will assist farmers and ranchers so far as possible in attaining production essential in critical production areas. These operators can be most effectively and adequately helped through the complete functioning, cooperatively, of the trained personnel of the State Extension Services, the State Experiment Stations, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the Soil Conservation Service, and other agencies. The Soil Conservation Service, therefore, will work closely with the respective State Soil Conservation Advisory Committees (State Directors of Extension Services and Experiment Stations and SCS State Coordinators) and AAA State Administrators in (a) determining areas where production gives rise to critical soil problems and farmers need additional assistance; (b) formulating and agreeing upon uniform recommendations for each such area; (c) determining assistance needed in such areas during critical seasons, in addition to that currently available therein; (d) considering what assistance the Extension Services, the State Experiment Stations, SCS and AAA can make available for work in each such area; and (e) detailing or assigning personnel and making available other assistance agreed upon for work in the respective critical areas. Emergency plans and measures may have to suffice for 1942. If so, it should be understood that such emergency measures and plans are to be changed over or converted into permanent soil safeguards.

### Conservation Assistance to the Armed Forces

The armed forces constitute the Nation's front line for war. These services continue to request the help of the SCS in erosion control operations, drainage, flood control, protection of water supplies against sedimentation, camouflage, and similar protective and facilitating activities on and near camp sites, cantonments, air fields, and other military areas. The Soil Conservation Service has from the beginning responded readily and expects to continue to make available whatever help of this type the armed services may require.

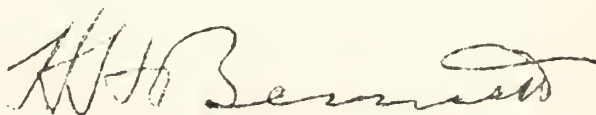
### Post-War Planning

The scope of the work to be done by the Department in the post-war planning field involves three different lines of inquiry: (a) keeping in touch with and making what contribution it can to developments that affect the national economy as a whole, (b) developing of rural works programs in the capital improvement field, and (c) developing publicly-sponsored programs of rural welfare and services. The Soil Conservation Service will be most helpful with work in the capital improvements field. In so far as personnel and resources are available without undue slackening of needed efforts in the war program, post-war planning and projecting will be undertaken in keeping with Departmental procedures and in cooperation with other agencies outside the Department, such as Soil Conservation Districts, Public Work Reserve, and National Resources Planning Board. The Service's organization is especially well designed for an important role in post-war reconstruction. It is thoroughly experienced in the efficient use of very large quantities of labor, equipment, and materials in soil and water conservation and land-use adjustments.

### SUMMARY

1. While the basic program and objectives of the Service in the conservation of the soil resource and in needed land-use adjustments will remain unchanged, the SCS will make its full contribution to the Departmental objective of producing the necessary food and fiber without further impairment to the land.
2. Cooperative research will broaden its objectives to supply all available findings pertinent to the war effort, to attack the new conservation problems arising from intensified production, and conduct studies and field trials to pave the way for extended operations.
3. Service assistance to soil conservation districts will take into account the new district responsibilities and opportunities in furthering the war effort.
4. Immediate necessary assistance will be provided in critical production areas in cooperation with other agencies.
5. A widespread simple practice program will be launched to the extent of available personnel.
6. Assistance to the armed forces will be given in accordance with existing agreement.
7. As time and resources are available beyond the more immediate war needs, the work of post-war planning will be carried forward.

All these considerations make it highly essential that the Service objectives and policies not only be maintained but carried out with the flexibility required by the emergency situation. Progressive soil conservation work is compatible with "production" and demands for production do not necessitate overlooking the immediate and long-time benefits accruing from soil and water conservation practices.

  
Chief



